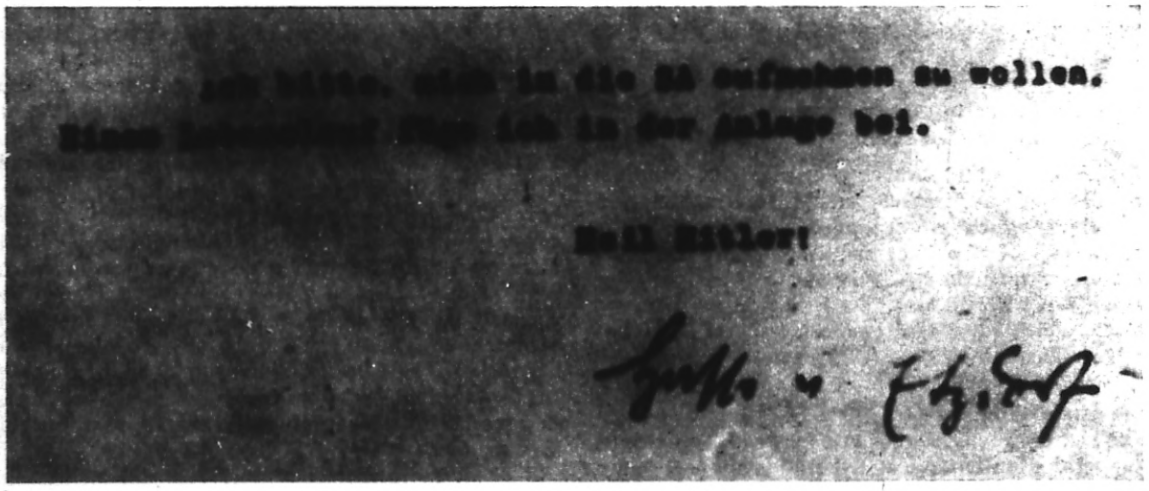

I apply for membership in the SA (Storm Troops). I enclose biographical notes.
Heil Hitler!

(signed) Hasso von Etzdorf
Rome, December 14th 1937

Hasso von Etzdorf, nazi Storm Troop officer, is the new West German Ambassador to London. For details of his career, see page 133.

DEMOCRATIC
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BERLIN BUSINESS

By the Editor

REC'D OCT 4 - 1961

Everybody must find it regrettable when a new frontier rises, with its whole apparatus of barbed wire, customs guards, inspections. All of us would prefer frontiers to become easier to pass, not more difficult.

But the paradoxical fact about the new frontier barriers erected between West Berlin and the German Democratic Republic on August 13th is that this new division is actually a big step towards reaching an agreed settlement of the German question; and the settlement of the German question will be a big step forward towards peace in Europe and a chance to make it easier to travel between different states instead of more difficult.

Germany has been effectively divided into two completely different states since 1949. Both of these states, the socialist German Democratic Republic in the east and the capitalist German Federal Republic in the West are going concerns, neither of which can be conquered, or absorbed, or subverted by the other without plunging the world into war.

It is in the interests of every one that these two states, so different in so many ways, should try to get along with each other; "co-existence" has been promoted to the rank of a dirty word by western propagandists, so let us say that the two German states should at least agree to differ, and go their own ways without endangering the world.

One of the very greatest obstacles to such a minimum "agreement to differ" has been the existence of West Berlin, a curious capitalist enclave bang in the centre of the German Democratic Republic.

What should be done about this centre of irritation? For more than two years, the statesmen of the socialist states have been urging that it should be converted into a demilitarised free city, free to select its own social system, and with full guarantees for its lines of communication in every direction. It would thus be "bracketed out" of the general German discussion, which would then be far easier to deal with.

The western powers, and in particular West Germany, have been very reluctant to do anything. They felt that the festering wound of West Berlin was much too valuable to them as a centre of subversion and propaganda aimed against the socialist world.

On August 13th this year, after countless proposals and suggestions made to the western side, all of which were ignored or rejected, the Government of the German Democratic Republic took steps to turn the invisible but very real frontier between West Berlin and East Berlin into a genuine frontier, which resembles in most respects the frontier between, let us say, France and Belgium, or Italy and Yugoslavia.

The establishment of this firm boundary appeared at first sight to many people as a step which worsened the general situation. Second thoughts showed many experienced observers that the situation had not been worsened, but in fact clarified and improved. Let me give you just one example, from an irreproachably "western" source.

Writing in the "New York Times" of August 18th, chief German correspondent Sydney Gruson reported from Berlin:

"It may not become publicly apparent for a while, but this week's events in Berlin have profoundly changed the Berlin and German problems with which East and West have been contending for a decade. This is the almost unanimous opinion of observers here. They believe that as a result the way has been considerably eased for the Russians to achieve their aims on Berlin through a negotiated settlement."

What are these "Russian aims on Berlin" which can now be more easily reached through a negotiated settlement? These aims are nothing sinister: they are simply, as I stated above, to insulate the West Berlin problem, put it on ice, and thus make it easier to get on with the settlement of the German problem as a whole.

Since western statesmen too constantly tell us that they want negotiations and want peace, they should really be very grateful to the German Democratic Republic for its firm action in Berlin; this has made successful negotiations easier, and taken us a step nearer to peace.

Questions and Answers

"The western powers state that the new frontier regulations in Berlin are a breach of various Four Power Agreements. What are the facts?"

A full answer to this question would take many pages of legal commentary: a short answer is easier and just as satisfactory. All the various Four Power Agreements on Germany and Berlin were based upon the basic agreements of Yalta and Potsdam. In these basic agreements, the war-time allies pledged themselves to extirpate German militarism and nazism, to break up the big trusts and monopolies which had brought Hitler to power, and in general to help create a new democratic Germany.

One look at West Germany, with its big army exclusively commanded by Hitler generals, with all the big monopolies like Krupp and IG Farben prospering as never before, should be sufficient to show that the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements have been torn up by the western allies. The various minor agreements, such as for instance a number of quadripartite agreements on Berlin, have obviously become null and void as a result.

*

"Have the western allies got any special rights in Berlin? Have these rights been infringed by the new frontier measures?"

The western allies had special "rights" in Berlin as long as they cooperated in implementing the Potsdam Agreement. They ceased to do this many years ago. Both the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic take a realistic attitude on the presence of western troops in West Berlin, and concede that there are various de facto western interests there, even if the legal basis is rather shaky. The recent GDR measures have represented no infringement of any of the "rights" claimed by the western allies, either with regard to their presence in West Berlin or the question of free access to West Berlin. Since, however, these "rights" stand on a very doubtful legal basis, it is urgently necessary that full-scale east-west negotiations should be held to clear up the whole rather complicated question.

*

"What right had the German Democratic Republic to close the frontier between the Republic and West Berlin?"

It is not correct to state the frontier has been closed. As at most frontiers, people can cross if armed with the proper passports, visas or permits. The German Democratic Republic is fully entitled to take such steps for the protection of its frontiers as it sees fit; every other sovereign state does the same.

*

"In what way was existence of the 'open frontier' in Berlin damaging to the German Democratic Republic?"

A full answer to this question was given in the Soviet note to Britain, the United States and France on August 19th:

"West Berlin is a centre of subversion, espionage and provocation directed against the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Leading figures in West Berlin have described it cynically as a 'thorn in the flesh of the GDR' as a 'front-line city' and as the 'cheapest atom-bomb'... The currency speculation and organised smuggling centred in West Berlin did enormous damage to the economy of the GDR. The open frontier with West Berlin cost the working people of the GDR at least 3,500,000,000 marks annually (about 300 million pounds sterling)."

*

"Have the new frontier regulations affected the daily lives of ordinary people in East and West Berlin."

Building a full-blown frontier through a city obviously makes things difficult in one way or another for many citizens; the most obvious example is that some main transport arteries have been interrupted, thus making the journey to work more difficult. Apart from this, ordinary citizens in both halves of Berlin have been very little affected by the new measures. The people who have been affected were those, in both east and west, who were profiting in some way from the abnormal situation of an open frontier between areas with different currencies and different prices. In East Berlin the people mainly hit are the "frontier-crossers", men and women who lived in East Berlin, taking advantage of the cheap rents and utilities, and worked in

West Berlin, taking advantage there of the currency racket to inflate their wage packet. More than 50,000 people in this category are now being found work in East Berlin, where they will get the rate for the job.

In West Berlin, the people mainly hit are the cold-war profiteers who organised the smuggling, the currency racket and the subversion.

Referring to the inconveniences created for the people of Berlin, the Soviet note quoted above stated:

"The blame for these difficulties must be placed squarely at the door of the occupation powers and the West German Government, which did everything to prevent a solution of the problems in this area, a solution which could have taken into consideration the just interests of all states."

BISHOP AWARDED

Bishop D. Moritz Mitzenheim of Thuringia, top Evangelic-Lutheran dignitary in the GDR, received the National Order of Merit in Gold on August 17th in honour of his 70th birthday. This award is the highest which the GDR can grant.

In his speech of acceptance, Bishop Mitzenheim stated: "The award which I have just been granted is for me an indication that the Government, too, values an orderly relationship between Church and State, in the interests of our people. In accepting this award, I regard it as including all the co-workers in the Church who have helped normalise the relationship between Church and State in our restless times. I also feel that all those Christians are included in this recognition who, known or unknown to the public, fulfilled their daily tasks because of their sense of Christian responsibility and thus helped to raise our people from the abyss of the 1945 catastrophe."

In granting the merit award, State Council Chairman Walter Ulbricht said to Bishop Mitzenheim: "In your work towards implementing the high and noble ideals of humanism, you stand in your blameless ideas and your merited labours on the side of all men of good will who work together towards the goals of peace and humanitarianism... In the construction of a new system in our country, one which serves peace and human happiness, the Christian citizens of our republic have also played an active part, and Christian politicians, prominent theologians and many Church functionaries have also worked ardently... Over and above all differences of world outlook, which no-one wishes to belittle or deny, is the great common humanitarian task of maintaining and guaranteeing peace for our people and the world."

New Measures Explained

Radio Speech by Walter Ulbricht

Speaking on the TV and radio network of the GDR on August 18th, Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council, said:

"The workers and with them all honest working people of the German Democratic Republic can breathe a sigh of relief. They were fed up with the activities of those involved in the traffic in human beings in West Berlin and in Bonn. With growing anger they had seen how they were being made fools of and robbed by the militarist rabble. The Bonn militarists mistook our patience for weakness, however. An embarrassing mistake, as can be seen now.

"You know that for years we have consistently proposed the solution of all questions through peaceful negotiations and through agreements. The Soviet memorandum which was presented to US President Kennedy in Vienna by Soviet Prime Minister Khrushchov, and the peace plan of the German people as passed by the GDR Parliament symbolise this spirit of understanding. They are based on the will to secure peace and to spare the peoples of Europe and the world from new military conflict. These steps taken by the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic in the interest of the peaceful solution of all outstanding questions were, however, only the last links in a long chain of offers to negotiate and proposals aimed at the peaceful solution of all problems.

"But how have the incorrigible militarists and revanchists answered these proposals? The Bonn Government rejected these as they have rejected more than one hundred proposals made in the past. War Minister Strauss ordered a speed-up in the atomic armament of the Bonn NATO army which is commanded by Hitlerite generals. He was even insolent enough to declare that the Second World War was not yet ended. In other words he directly connects his adventurous plan with those of Hitler and Himmler.

"The German militarists increased their diversionist activities against the German Democratic Republic as a further step in the preparation of agressive action. They used all means at their disposal to organize traffic in human beings and diversionist activities.

"We know the plans of the Bonn Government. They were aimed at creating conditions that would allow an open attack against the GDR, civil war and open military provocations at some time after the West German elections.

"It is clear that, in view of such adventurous plans and the speed-up of preparations to carry them out, a very dangerous situation had arisen for peace in Europe and in the world.

"In order to remove this danger to the peace of our people and all peoples we contacted our friends at an early date and agreed to eliminate it. The measures taken by our Government contribute to saving peace in Europe and in the world, which was endangered this August 1961 by Western militarist and revanchist policies. The citizens of West Germany and West Berlin should also understand that it is very possible that their lives were saved by these steps.

"Many GDR citizens have asked us why we waited so long, why these necessary measures were not taken at an earlier date. I reply quite frankly that there was a time when we had hoped to exploit every possibility for understanding. We exposed the war preparations of the Bonn Government in ample time. I wrote to the Bonn Chancellor Adenauer and warned him. We appealed directly to the West German workers and explained just what was taking place in West Germany. We appealed to all West German citizens in an attempt to clarify what responsibilities they have for developments in their countries.

"Adenauer and Strauss, their Hitlerite generals and accomplices from Globke and Lemmer to Brandt, have not shown any particular originality in their attempts to overpower the GDR. There are enough people who remember the manner in which Hitler prepared his attack against Czechoslovakia and then against Poland. At that time the radio and newspapers published for months at a time reports of poor refugees, of old women who were forced to jump over brooks at the frontiers while bringing small children "heim ins Reich" (home to the Reich), to save themselves and to reach "freedom". And in addition to this there were the habitual propaganda lies about the right to self-determination, i.e. self-determination according to the recipe of German imperialism, which wanted to decide which country to swallow up next.

"In exactly the same manner, in fact with literally the same headlines, the West German militarist press attempted to slander the German Dem-

ocratic Republic in 1961. They attempted to confuse GDR citizens, to create panic among people with weak nerves and to prepare the ground for aggression.

"For everyone who has eyes to see and ears to hear, it is obvious that West Berlin is in fact an extremely dangerous hotbed of war which could become a second Sarajevo. An increasing number of people in Germany and in other countries have arrived at the opinion that it is no longer sufficient to speak of peace in general. It is much more important to see that the fire which is being kindled in West Berlin is brought under control before it spreads to neighbouring houses.

"It was our task to do this, particularly since West Berlin is located in the centre of our territory and within the frontiers of our State. Our house was the first which was to go up in flames. Thus we, too, were responsible for seeing that this point of danger was brought under control. In addition to this, we as a part of the Socialist camp, as a Socialist state, have the great obligation to see that the policy of peaceful co-existence which is so desperately needed in the world is not disrupted by insane West German militarists or their West Berlin hangers-on.

"We have, I believe, made an important contribution towards peace by securing the frontiers of the German Democratic Republic against West Berlin and against West Germany.

"We have taken steps to ensure that the peaceful construction of socialism can continue and that the traffic in human beings and enticement of citizens to leave the German Democratic Republic conducted by West German militarism be stopped.

"But at the same time — and this seems to me to be particularly important — we have made the leading politicians and the population of West Germany conscious of the true balance of power in Germany and in the world. Our measures have also shown that we are earnestly and consistently laying the groundwork for a peace treaty. These measures will, without a doubt, make the conclusion of a peace treaty and the conversion of West Berlin into a demilitarized free city much easier".

GDR WRITER ANSWERS WESTERN COLLEAGUES

Stephan Hermlin, prominent GDR poet and short-story writer, expressed the feelings of many writers and intellectuals in an open letter to Wolfdietrich Schnurre and Guenter Grass, two West German writers who had urged him and other GDR authors to protest the closing of the West Berlin frontier by the GDR on August 13th. The letter is slightly shortened.

Yesterday you sent an open letter to a number of writers in the German Democratic Republic ... You wrote: "If West German authors take up the task of writing against a Hans Globke staying in the government; if West German authors call the planned Emergency Power Law of Interior Minister Gerhard Schroeder an undemocratic law; if West German authors warn against authoritarian clericalism in the Federal Republic, then you have exactly the same obligation to call the injustice of August 13th by its proper name."

Your argument is based on a false conclusion. If you speak out against Globke and Schroeder, who rule over you, that does not in any way give me the obligation of speaking out against my government, which has opposed Globke and Schroeder rather more forcefully than you are doing — with all due respect to your civil courage. On the contrary, my government can be sure of my approval in its actions of this kind. Indeed, what you call the injustice of August 13th is actually a government action against the Globke and Schroeder policies. The injustice of August 13th? Which injustice are you referring to? To judge by your newspapers and broadcasts, one might believe that a great city has been divided by an act of violence into two sections. But since I have a fairly good memory and have been living in this city since I returned fourteen years ago, I can recall that I have been living in a divided city since the middle of 1948, a city with two currencies, two mayors, two city administrations, two kinds of police, two social systems, in a city ruled by two diametrically opposed conceptions of life. The splitting of Berlin began with the western currency reform in mid-1948. What followed on August 13th was a logical step in a development which was not begun from this side of the city.

I did not send my government any telegram of thanks on August 13th, and I would not define my emotion as one of "joyful approval" as some people like to express it. Whoever knows me knows that I am an advocate of living together, of free travel, of unhindered exchange in all spheres of human life, especially in the cultural sphere. But I earnestly approve, without reservations, the measures taken by the Government of the German Democratic Republic. As we have already seen, these measures have served to strengthen the anti-Globke state, they have brought us one large step forwards towards achieving a peace treaty, which is the most urgent necessity at present, because it is the only method of holding back on its aggressive path the most dangerous state in the world, the West German Federal Republic.

I can still recall very cleary the disgusting farce of an alleged national upheaval which I saw, while still a very young man, on January 30th 1933 at the Brandenburg Gate. Tens of thousands of people told each other then, in teary-eyed hysteria, that Germany was finally freed from its bondage (after Hitler's seizure of power, ed.). If only some *red* tanks had been present at the Brandenburg Gate then, the march to the east would never have been started, no Eichmann trials need ever have taken place, and today the three of us might be sitting in a café on Alexanderplatz or Kurfürstendamm in a city which had never been destroyed or divided.

You appeal very urgently to those to whom you addressed your letter not to retreat from answering this question, for in view of the present situation silence is impossible — just as impossible, you write, as in the Hitler years between 1933 and 1945. You have clearly not given enough thought to the names of those addressed in your letter, for it is just they, or at least their majority, who in the years between 1933 and 1945 did not at all remain silent, in contrast to so many of the self-appointed defenders of western freedom of the year 1961.

Letter on Berlin

Here is the text of a letter to "The Guardian" of August 19th 1961 by Mr Frank Beswick, former Labour MP and British delegate to the UN General Assembly:

Sir, — Is there anyone above 40 who saw the televised picture of Wednesday's (West) Berlin rally who could fail to be reminded of the days of Hitler? The same intonation of the German orator; the same well drilled cheers at the proper pauses; even the same appeal to the hatred of communism. Are we really going to allow these people to drag us into a third and last world war?

STORM TROOP AMBASSADOR

The Life & Hard Times of Herr von Etzdorf

In the next few weeks a former Lieutenant-Colonel of Hitler's brown-uniformed storm troops will arrive in London to take up his post as West German Ambassador to the Court of St James. He is Hasso von Etzdorf, highest-ranking nazi to occupy the traditional German Embassy building in London since his old boss, executed war criminal Joachim von Ribbentrop, represented Hitler in London in 1936.

Who is Hasso von Etzdorf? Let us quote from an irreproachable source, White Paper No 3465 published by the West German Parliament in May 1952. This White Paper, produced by a special Parliamentary Committee appointed to investigate charges that former nazi diplomats had taken over the West German Foreign Ministry, summarised Herr von Etzdorf's biography as follows:

"Born March 2nd 1900 in Elbing. Evangelical. Married, no children.

"Career: 1928/31 Attaché in the Foreign Office. 1931/34 Tokio Embassy. 1934/36 Secretary of Reich Foreign Minister von Neurath. 1937/38 Embassy in Rome. 1938 Consul in Palermo. 1938/39 Foreign Office. 1939/44 representative of Foreign Office with Supreme Command of the Army. 1945 General Consul in Genoa . . .

"1919 member of German National People's Party, 1924/33 member of Stahlhelm. June 1st 1933 Member of NSDAP (Nazi Party), membership No. 3,286,356. From June 1938 Major of the SA (Storm Troops), later Lieutenant Colonel of the SA."

It is perhaps necessary to stress that these biographical notes are taken from the report of an official commission of the West German Parliament.

A few other details of Hasso von Etzdorf's career are to be found in another official document: the biographical notes which he himself supplied to the nazi party on December 14th 1937 when he applied to join the brown-uniformed storm troops. A copy of this application form was filed away in Herr von Etzdorf's file in the nazi Foreign Ministry, found in the nazi archives after the war.

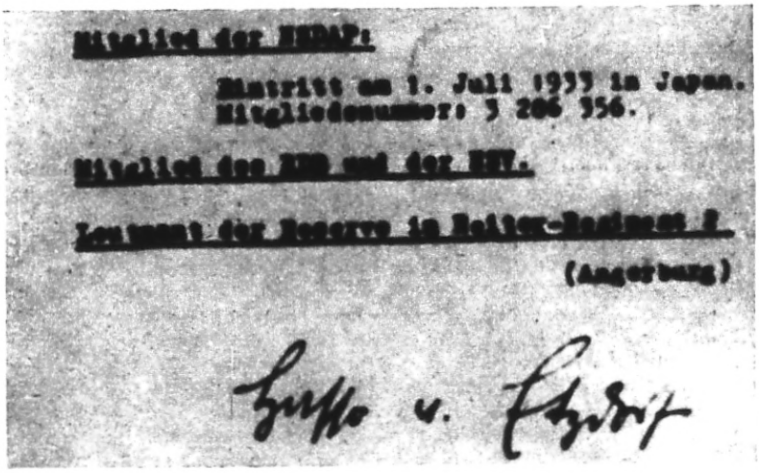
In these biographical notes, the new West German Ambassador in London proudly records that he was always on the side of militarism and reaction. At the age of 18 he was Ordnance Officer in one of the White Guard "Free Corps" which suppressed the revolution in Berlin, and murdered hundreds of Berlin workers: in 1920 he was an officer in the "Goettingen Student Company", another White Guard military formation which drowned in blood the general strike in central Germany. Herr von Etzdorf also records that he remained a member of this semi-illegal right wing military formation until 1923.

In 1924 he joined the Stahlhelm, the "Steelhelmets", an extreme right-wing paramilitary force which helped clear the way for the nazi seizure of power. He was a co-founder of the Stahlhelm group in Koenigsberg, East Prussia, and holder of the "Stahlhelm Medal of Honour".

He further notes that he joined the Nazi Party on July 1st 1933 when he was serving as Legation Secretary of the German Embassy in Tokio. In this connection it is important to recall that in the early years of the nazi regime, no form of pressure to join the Nazi Party was exerted on members of the diplomatic service. Most German diplomats remained outside the nazi party until 1938, when Ribbentrop became Foreign Minister.

Von Etzdorf's autobiographical notes only take us to 1937, when he joined the Storm Troops. Immediately upon the outbreak of war he was sent to the General Staff of Hitler's Army as Foreign Ministry representative, and he held this post until a few months before the end of the war when he decided it would be wiser to "civilianise" himself, and got appointed nazi General Consul in Genoa. This was a more important post than it sounds, since Genoa was one of the main centres in that part of Italy still controlled by Mussolini's "Republican Fascist Government" in the closing months of the war.

What did Herr von Etzdorf actually do during the war years as Foreign Ministry representative with the Army High Command? Most of the nazi files for this period are not available for inspection, since they are held by the USA, Britain, and West Germany. Files which are available, some of which have been produced in the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, show that other Foreign Ministry representatives with various branches of Hitler's armed forces played an active part in the deportation to the liquidation camps of Jews from the occupied countries. It is



Here are the last few lines from Hasso von Etzdorf's application for membership in the Storm Troops:

"Member of the NSDAP (Nazi Party)
Entry on July 1st 1933 in Japan
Membership Number: 3,286,356
Member of the RDB (Reich League of German Officials) and NSV (National Socialist People's Welfare Association)
Lieutenant of the Reserve in Cavalry Regiment 2 (Angerburg)
(signed) Hasso von Etzdorf

only fair to state that no evidence has yet been unearthed of similar activity by Herr von Etzdorf. The scanty documents which have survived show that Hasso von Etzdorf was closely linked with the "Kuenzberg Commando", a special unit of the nazi Foreign Ministry which looted art treasures and secret archives in German-occupied territory; and other documents show that he was active in intelligence work, and particularly in the recruiting of Russian Quislings for service in the nazi cause.

Probably the most interesting wartime document signed by Herr von Etzdorf which has yet come to light is a plan for the partitioning-up of colonial territory in Africa between Germany and Italy.

On September 4th 1940, after the nazi armies had overrun France and were poised to attack Britain, Hasso von Etzdorf forwarded the following letter to Berlin from Hitler's army H. Q.:

"Colonial Plans

"In case of a peaceful settlement with Britain, the following territories will go to Germany: The French and Belgian Congos, French Equatorial Africa...

"If at the same time the British territories are divided, then the following will be allotted to Germany: Uganda, Zanzibar, one half of Kenya (southern highlands with Nairobi), Nigeria, Gold Coast...

"In addition the Navy requests: Ascension, Tristan da Cunha, St Helena... and Madagascar for the Jews."

It will be recalled that at this time Eichmann was considering the idea of deporting all the Jews of Europe to Madagascar. The letter quoted above was produced at the Nuremberg Trials as Document NG-2725.

Let us return now to the West German Parliamentary Commission which investigated in 1952 charges against Herr von Etzdorf and other nazi diplomats. The commission, which did its best to white-wash everybody it could, has the following explanation for the high post in the Storm Troops held by Hasso von Etzdorf:

"The commission has ascertained that the Storm Troops rank held by von Etzdorf was only assimilated rank; it was given him during his term at the Embassy in Rome so that he could appear in uniform, as was the political style of those days, when Nazi Party leaders paid visits."

After considering various aspects of Herr von Etzdorf's record, the white-washing commision ruled that he was a perfectly suitable person to represent West Germany abroad. In making this decision the commission was greatly helped by a secret memorandum drafted by Hasso von Etzdorf and another nazi diplomat named Erich Kordt in October 1939, a memorandum which could be construed as showing that Herr von Etzdorf was really an "anti-nazi resistance fighter".

Since this memorandum is likely to play a large part in the attempts which are likely to be made to present Hasso von Etzdorf to the British public as a fine upright anti-nazi, it is perhaps necessary to deal with it at some length.

The position in October 1939, after the conclusion of Hitler's campaign against Poland, was that many German nationalist and military leaders became scared that Hitler was perhaps over-reaching himself. Now that Hitler had conquered Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland for them, these militarists thought it might be a good idea to call a halt.

It is in light of these facts that Hasso von Etzdorf's memorandum should be considered. This memorandum, which was circulated amongst a circle of Hitler's generals, stated in part:

"1. Attacking Belgium will not be successful, and will jeopardise what we have already won.

"2. If it had not been for Hitler's 'infallible instinct' it would have been possible to conduct the Polish campaign in Autumn 1938 or Spring 1939 without the western powers becoming involved on Poland's side...

"3. The conditions under which a later German Government can conclude peace depend upon the strength which Germany can throw into the scale. Only a Government which disposes of an intact army will be able to conclude peace with honour...

"...a peace which would not infringe Germany's ethnic frontier (approximately as fixed at Munich), and would establish an overland connection between East Prussia and the Reich, and restore to Germany the Upper Silesian industrial districts.

"Such a solution would satisfy her real national interest. It would avoid burdening Germany with alien elements, and yet, for geographic and economic reasons, would secure for

A Different Sort of Ambassador

What sort of men represent the German Democratic Republic abroad? Typical is Walter Vesper, 63-year-old Ambassador of the GDR in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Throughout his life, Walter Vesper has been on the other side of the barricades from West German Ambassador von Etzdorf, sometimes in the most literal sense of the words.

Walter Vesper, son of a worker, joined the Socialist Youth Movement in 1912, and in 1917, during World War One, he joined the Spartakus League, fore-runner of the German Communist Party. In January 1918 he was one of the leaders of an anti-war strike in the city of Jena, was arrested and conscripted into the Kaiser's army. On the way to the front he managed to desert, and worked underground until the revolution in November 1918, when he became a member of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council in Wuppertal, in the Ruhr.

In January 1919 he was wounded in the Spartakus rising in Berlin; West German diplomat von Etzdorf fought for the White Guards against the socialist workers.

In March 1920 he was fighting again in the ranks of the Ruhr Red Army, which overthrew the reactionary Kapp Putsch; von Etzdorf was again on the other side.

Throughout the Weimar Republic, while von Etzdorf was organising the reactionary Stahlhelm organisation, Walter Vesper was a trade union official in the Ruhr, and active in the Communist Party.

Immediately after Hitler came to power, he was arrested and sent to Buergermoor Concentration Camp. After his release he made his way abroad, and in 1936 hurried to Spain to join the International Brigades.

During the Second World War, after a period in a French internment camp, he fought with the French Maquis: after the liberation he was awarded the "Liberation Medal of the French Resistance".

After the Second World War he helped to rebuild the Communist Party in the Ruhr before he came to Berlin to take up the post of Deputy Chairman of the National Front of Democratic Germany.

Today he represents the German Democratic Republic in Prague.

her a predominant influence over a rump-Czechia and a rump-Poland. It would also be an equivalent for the sacrifices and laurels of the Polish campaign . . .

"Such a peace would take into account the general fear of a further expansion of Bolshevism in Europe . . . It would allow Britain and France to save their faces."

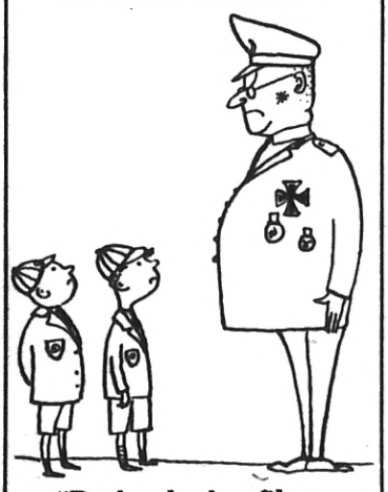
Perhaps the best comment on this memorandum, which is presented to us today as the deed of a "German resistance fighter" has been given by the noted British historian Sir Lewis Namier. In his book "In the Nazi Era", published in London by Macmillan in 1952, Sir Lewis quotes parts of the Etzdorf memorandum and comments:

"Thus the Munich frontier, which included some 800,000 Czechs in Germany, was claimed as just, while part or the whole of the Polish Corridor and of Upper Silesia was claimed without reference to 'ethnology'; and it was fully and pleasurably realised that such a territorial settlement would give Germany the whip hand over the 'rumps' of these two nations. The 'good Germans' visibly change into Hitler profiteers."

There is little to be added. "Good German" Etzdorf, the man who murdered German workers in 1919, and who wanted a Storm Troop officer's uniform in 1937 so that he could shine in the company of nazi big-wigs, served Hitler faithfully throughout the war and to the bitter end.

Now he is going to serve Adenauer in London.

Welsh Corner



"Dychwelwch – filwyr gorllewin yr Almaen!"

Drawing by Elizabeth Shaw

Schizophrenic Germany?

"Schizophrenic Germany" by John Dornberg. Published by The Macmillan Company, New York, 1961.

This book, written by the news editor of "Overseas Weekly", an American-owned English-language newspaper published in West Germany for American servicemen, sets out to investigate whether nazism still plays a part in the West Germany of today.

Much of the material in the book will be very familiar to readers of GERMAN REPORT. He deals at some length with nazi judges, Dr Globke, Dr Theodor Oberlaender, and the nazi-infected school books used in the West German schools today, and it may be useful to have in book form many of the exposures first aired in the English language in the pages of this paper.

With Mr Dornberg's facts I have little argument; but he is, after all, an American journalist living and working in West Germany, so it may be expected that in his final summing up he pulls his punches: his final conclusion is summed up in a series of unanswered questions:

"Is the German democracy solid enough to withstand the test of economic recession or depression? Can it weather a political onslaught from either the left or the right? How will it fare once it has to contend with its first change of top leadership?"

Another weakness of the book is that it deals almost exclusively with West Germany: no serious attempt is made to compare re-nazification in West Germany with the very serious attempts to deal with the past made in the German Democratic Republic. Almost the only mention of the GDR is, in fact, a rather tired list of a handful of former nazi party members who now hold some posts in the Republic, but Mr Dornberg has the grace to make the following admission:

"The DDR (German abbreviation for GDR) also has its political skeletons in its public closet, but far fewer than West Germany. The Soviet zone officials have exploited the propaganda value of this fully. Many of the ex-Nazis in the West German officialdom have been 'exposed' or 'uncovered' by hard-hitting, well-aimed, and carefully timed press announcements and research reports. Nearly half of all the West German political 'exposes' and 'scandals' have had their origin in documentation supplied by the DDR or other satellite countries. Although the motives for publication of this documentation are more than obvious, that has thus far failed to detract in any way from the accuracy of the charges and allegations."

All in all, this is not a book which has much new to tell for people who already know much about re-nazification in West Germany. It would, however, be a very valuable book to give, or lend, to those who still say that such charges are "all a lot of Communist propaganda".

John Peet

Birds of a Feather

Rear Admiral Karl Adolf Zenker was appointed on July 31st to command the West German Navy in place of retiring Vice Admiral Friedrich Ruge, one-time nazi naval commander in Italy and mine-sweeper "fuehrer" in the English Channel.

During World War Two Zenker, a member of Hitler's Admiralty Staff, helped plan the invasions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands. After 1941 Zenker commanded a nazi destroyer in a series of naval battles.

On January 16th 1956, during a speech to officers of the new West German Navy in Wilhelmshaven, Zenker defended top nazi admirals Raeder and Doenitz, both convicted war criminals. He stated that "the Nuremberg Court passed sentence on these two honourable men at a time of confusion, and they would not be sentenced today." (Doenitz was the man Hitler chose as his successor shortly before his death, and Raeder was convicted of making unrestricted warfare on neutral ships and passing on orders to shoot Allied prisoners of war.)

Eichmann Friend Sues

Dr Erhard Wetzel, once "Expert on Jews" in the nazi Ministry for Eastern Territories and a friend of Adolf Eichmann, had been receiving a monthly pension of 1600 marks (about £133) in Hanover, West Germany, until Eichmann trial publicity led provincial officials to end payments. Wetzel is now suing to receive the money again.

In 1941, in an official letter, Dr Wetzel wrote: "There would be no objections in the present situation if those Jews who cannot work be done away with by the Brack method (gas chambers, the ed.) . . . Eichmann is in agreement."

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Berlin, as you may well imagine, has been an interesting place in the past week or two. However necessary it may be to throw a full-scale frontier through the middle of a city, this inevitably affects the daily lives of a lot of people; though it has not affected them as much as one might guess from some of the scare stories in a number of western newspapers.

The day after the new border regulations went into effect, I ran into an old-age pensioner of my aquaintance. "Isn't it dreadful" she said. "What will my budgerigars do now? I've always fed them on western bird seed, and I'm sure that eastern bird seed won't agree with them".

We happened to be standing outside a shop which sells "eastern" bird seed, so I popped inside, and bought her a packet for a few pfennings. I am glad to be able to report that when I saw her a few days later she told me that her budgerigars had not noticed the difference.

This story has the advantage of being absolutely true: it also shows in a very minor example the sort of mental confusion which the famed "West Berlin show-window" had induced in the minds of a lot of people in East Berlin. Many of them were prepared to swear, as a local journalist put it, that "West Berlin air has more calories in it than East Berlin air". Now they are finding out that the East Berlin air is just as good.

Steel Hits Nail

I generally have little good to say of Sir Christopher Steel, British Ambassador to West Germany, but he hit the nail on the head on August 17th, after he had made a tour of both West and East Berlin. He told journalists: "I get the impression on both sides that it is very much business as usual."

How normal things are as soon as you get away from the immediate vicinity of the strictly controlled border was brought home to me very forcibly on August 20th, one whole week after the new frontier regulations came into force. I received a phone call from an American business man whom I had met a few years ago. He said he was just passing through on his way home from a business trip to Moscow and Prague. He had been in East Berlin for 24 hours, and just wanted to give me a ring before proceeding westwards on his way home. After a few minutes of chit-chat he said: "Oh, tell me one thing: somebody told me a few minutes ago in my hotel here that there has been some sort of a change at the frontier here in Berlin. What is the situation?"

I must admit I was a little flabbergasted, but it turned out that since he could not read Russian or Czech newspapers he had not been aware of the story which had held the world headlines for the past week, and during a full day and night in East Berlin he had noticed nothing unusual. I briefed him quickly on the situation, and he set off happily for New York, promising to tell the folks at home that as far as he was concerned there was certainly no crisis in East Berlin.

Proving a Point

During the past weeks, about half the foreign correspondents of the western world seem to have been streaming through Berlin, and quite a lot of them have landed up in my office. Just two days after the new frontier regulations went into effect, when there was still some commotion caused by gangs of rowdies on the western side, I was chatting to a British journalist in my office. I was making the point that the border through Berlin might appear dramatic, because it ran through the heart of a city, but that in essence it was no different than the frontier between France and Belgium, for example. The British correspondent differed. "You don't see tanks massed along the Franco-Belgian frontier" he objected.

"I bet you would if there were gangs of Belgians massed along one side of the frontier chanting 'Hang de Gaulle' and lobbing occasional bricks at the French frontier guards" I replied.

"Come now, you are exaggerating" said the British journalist. So I just opened my office window; my office lies about half a mile from the Brandenburg Gate, but the wind was blowing from that direction, and we could distinctly hear the gangs of West Berlin hoodlums chanting in chorus "Hang Ulbricht". The British correspondent gracefully conceded the point.

I would like to emphasise that the real danger of western-inspired border clashes only lasted for the first two or three days. After that, the West Berlin police, acting on very firm instructions from London and Washington, took the steps which should have been taken much earlier to stop the rowdies gathering; but of course there were, and still are, prominent circles in West Berlin which long for a good bloody border incident. I have recounted this story at such length as at least a partial answer to the people who ask: "Was it really necessary to push so many tanks and so much barbed wire up to the border line"? It certainly was: tanks and barbed wire don't make pleasant pictures, but in some cases, as here, they can be very useful in putting out fires.

Taping Trouble

The Germans have a special expression, "Schadenfreude", meaning pleasure at the discomfiture of others. I must admit that I had a little bit of this Schadenfreude myself twice last week. First of all, a western radio man asked me to say something about the GDR point of view into his tape machine. It was a beautifully gleaming machine, almost a microcosm of the "western way of life". The only difficulty was that it simply did not work. The radio man hurried away discomfited and came back next day. "I'm sure it's going to work now" he said. But it didn't.

The very next afternoon, a western TV man asked me to appear before his film camera. I agreed, after he solemnly pledged that his camera had always worked. For an hour we sweated under the floodlight getting the interview done. A few hours later the TV man rang up: "The film has been mysteriously fogged", he said. "Could we do the whole thing again?" I am fairly polite so I accepted his explanation, but I privately believe they had forgotten to put a film into the camera.

My wife has another explanation: After experiencing my efforts to be a handy man round the house she claims that a machine automatically breaks when I get within two feet of it.

Welsh Corner

For those readers whose Welsh is not as fluent as it should be, the schoolboy in the cartoon on the previous page is saying very politely: "West German soldier, go home!" It was only after I had caught a tame Welshman to write the caption that I learned that Castlemartin, where the West German troops are going to be stationed, is an almost exclusively English-speaking area.

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